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homemakers' chat

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U.S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

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RE SUBJECT: "HOT PLATE MEALS FOR HOT DAYS." Information from electrification ad-
visors of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Meals in midsummer...meals when the mercury climbs...food for the family
on days when you'd like to retire to a hammock in the shade and forget food.
That's the problem most homemakers have at this time of year. You know how it
is. You're hot...you're busy...maby you're tired. It's a temptation to just
set out some cold leftover for the family.

But your family needs appetizing, nourishing meals whatever the weather.
And cold tidbits...whatever happens to be in the refrigerator...are hot enough
for the main meal of the day. Something hot makes almost any meal better.

But that's not saying you need to swelter over a big stove to get the right
kind of meal. On just one small burner...or on one of those small electric hot
plates so many people have, you can prepare a one-dish meal that will satisfy
everybody. You can prepare a nourishing hot dish of meat and vegetables...or
eggs...or cheese, and then round out the meal with a crisp cold salad...bread...
and fruit for dessert...or with a cold fruit drink.

You can make an excellent meat-and-vegetable stew on one of these little
hot plates in about an hour for a family of 5 or 6. Cut up in fairly small pieces
a pound and a half of meat...lean beef, lamb, veal, or chicken. Sprinkle flour,
salt, and pepper over the meat until each piece is well coated. Now brown the
meat in a little fat in the kettle. Use any good-tasting leftover fat that you
happen to have. Add to the meat in the kettle 6 small onions...1 cup of celery,
cut up...6 medium-sized carrots, sliced the long way...and 6 medium-sized peeled

potatoes...some chopped parsley from your garden. Add a cup of hot water or some meat broth or stock if you have it. Cover the kettle closely. Cook for an hour or an hour and a half.

This makes a good hearty meal in itself. Along with it you might serve crisp cold cole slaw...or sliced tomatoes.

If you cook a dish like this on an electric hot plate, here are a couple of points to remember. Have the heat turned high to brown the meat. Then, after you add the vegetables, and the stew becomes hot enough to steam, turn the heat down to low. Low heat will be just right to cook the meat and vegetables slowly so they won't overcook or scorch on the bottom. Low heat saves electricity and doesn't heat up the kitchen.

Incidentally, that's always the rule to follow in cooking anything on an electric hot plate. Start the food on high heat...then switch to low heat to finish the cooking. And usually you can switch the heat off entirely for the last 10 or 15 minutes before the food is done. The heat stored in the hot plate and in the pan is enough to finish the last of the cooking.

Now here's another one-dish meal called "braised liver." Use any kind of liver---beef, pork or veal. Get about a pound of liver and have it sliced about half an inch thick. Brown one diced onion and remove it from the pan. Then cut the meat into two-inch squares, roll it in flour, salt and pepper and brown it in the same pan. Put in the onions together with two diced carrots, six pared potatoes sliced a quarter of an inch thick and any other vegetables you like--all on top of the liver. Next add one cup of tomato juice and a cup of boiling water. Cover the pan and let the mixture simmer gently for an hour and a half or until tender.

If your hotplate has two units, you can use the other unit to cream some new potatoes, cook string beans or prepare roasting ears. A cottage cheese-

fruit salad teams up well with this dish and home-made ice cream from your refrigerator is always a good dessert.

You can also use your electric hot plate to prepare such one-dish meals as New England boiled dinners, hamburger and spaghetti, macaroni and cheese, pork-chops with alternate layers of sweet potatoes and apples.

Or you can use your electric plate for scrambling or creaming eggs, making omelettes or pan-broiling ham, bacon and chops.

So much for meal ideas. You can also use your hotplate for small canning, pickling and preserving jobs. This will save heating your kitchen range on hot days.

Rural electrification advisors of the Department of Agriculture have gathered together several suggestions for using your hot plate efficiently...tips on how to save vitamins and minerals in cooking...pointers on caring for your electric hot plate so it will last longer. If you would like one of these free leaflets, write to the Rural Electrification Administration, that is, the REA, at St. Louis, Missouri. I'll repeat that last address--the R--E--A--at St. Louis.

